

Quintain

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Quintain

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a magazine devoted to new poetry and prose is published twenty times a year at Christmas-Saucon Hall, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Calvin Israel, Editor. Editorial Staff: R. C. Cunningham, H. M. Houlehan, M. Levy, Edgar H. Riley and H. Webber.

TO THE READER

"Therefore has language, most dangerous of possessions, been given to man...so that he may affirm what he is..."

Hölderlin

Without poetry we are silent; with it, we are made to realize we are human. We cannot put aside this gift of tongue, nor use it to assert what is trivial or of the moment. And so the poet strives to say what seems plain to all but what shrouds itself in a mystery of silence.

Because poetry has this function in the making of man, this magazine exists.

IN GREETING

Struck dumb that we retrieve ourselves and men
With silence, I gave you to those jesting
Pilots of my eyes, who narrowly moved
In shoals of gambolike words. I, sage,
Intoned, 'Whereof one cannot speak, thereof
One must be dead to life.' You stared,
Such agony of shadow lifted high,
A face that shared the shining, rare deceit
Of quietude. And given now the calm
Of anchored love, I wondered if men knew
As Judas did, the eyes of truth are blue?

M. LEVY

THE NAY-SAYING CROW

With a drop of the jaw

All crows will say "Caw,"

But I know a crow that says "Uh-uh."

When Unite is their word

My solitaire bird,

Out on a limb, mutters "Uh-uh."

Rare as a white one

Is my total night one

Who has thought it all out and says "Uh-uh."

On a blithe May day

When the world sang Yea,

And creature sought creature

As if by nature,

He fingered the Spring

On skeptical wing

And damned the whole thing with an "Uh-uh."

E. N. DILWORTH

LISBON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Here the sanctuary shield
Of spring-sweet green
Is rudely torn to bleed away
The gentle thrust of white and yolk
In which we have a general being.
Flywheels spin Penelope's deception,
Trundle time away and with it
Their excrescence in centrifugal abandon.
Lisbon never sees the end of frenzy,
Never can: a loaf or fish is neither cast nor stamped.
Heels of children bruise against the stone-struck earth
And women fat with immanence
Are seized by dread as nine months
Ruptures the narcosis of the needle stacks,
Their fumes, the sooty reservoirs beneath.
Manhood measures fingers callous-sheathed from quickening
Against a pay-day passion, and is sad.

A blasphemy beyond the pulpit's knowing
Blasts the cindered valley.
Still, the children do at times exult
Upon the finding of an oily violet,
Their startled brothers are impelled like dewy peas from pods
And learn the less to hate their exile.
Elders, too, are thought to weep and smile
At tasseled funerals or Mickey Mouse.
Even birds which cough on perches
Yet hold fast, and fast
And fast.

HOWARD R. WEBBER

ILLUSION

I had not thought that life could be compressed
So well within the limit of a frame,
Nor that another hand would now reclaim
Forgotten fancies to which I once addressed
The ardor of my dreams, those dreams that blessed
My sleep until awakening became
The twin of death and dawn assumed the blame
For passions that my midnight soul possessed;
But there I see her smiling into eyes
That are not mine, so careless of that smile
That kindles heart-fires all too slow to cool,
A vagabond who shared my nights awhile
And counterfeited love, only to rise
And seek the tribute of another fool.

R. C. CUNNINGHAM

THE MARE OF MEDELAUS

Helen boards the Brighton local,
queenly Helen
adjusts most carefully and smoothly so..
warmly glowing, cleanly shaven
legs, medicated tenderly.

Proud though shipless, popping gum,
she dreams most delicate
the ring of Paris
flashing in the autumn sunlight,
equal to a thousand Trojan coins.

To thee will I go naked from the water
diaphragmed,
bear me but a block away
and we shall know the joys
and arms and songs of ancient age.

Unparolied, unheralded,
Helen alights, embraces
Paris, rocketback and fur,
storming all the peering Grecian faces;
stands to the parapet with giggles and a kiss.

CALVIN ISRAEL

THE UNDER-WRITER'S CLERK

An onder-wryteres clerk was in that plas,
Insuraunce bar he in a leathern cas,
And hye upon a bicycle he sat;
Upon his heed, a bateder booler hat:
Ful solempne his atyr, and al of blak,
An overcoot he wered and eek a mak.
"Reyn is an Iot of God," quod he, "meschaunce
That nis ne covered by myn insuraunce,
Wherfor must I tak cover of myn owen."
A better covered man was never known:
For al meschaunces was his policye,
For Fyr and Thefte; Arson and Robberye.
Ful many a widwe oughte to him hir wele,
And er ful many an orphan drank his hele
For that he esed hir anguissch and hir peyne;
That was hir benefyt was eke his geyne,
And only to hir gode was his avys;
For thogh he were Prudential, he was wys.

D. MELDRUM

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